

Message Text

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C O N F I D E N T I A L BRUSSELS 04649

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USEEC

E.O. 11652: GDS
TAGS: EEC, US, MNUC
SUBJECT: EC FOREIGN MINISTERS COUNCIL, MARCH 7, 1978:
- RENEGOTIATION OF U.S.-EURATOM AGREEMENT

REF: (A) BRUSSELS 4468, (B) 77 PARIS 22022

1. IN LOOKING A BIT FURTHER INTO THE EC FOREIGN MINISTERS' DISCUSSION OF THE U.S.-EURATOM RELATIONSHIP, I HAVE OBTAINED INCONTROVERTIBLE VERIFICATION OF THE ESSENTIAL ACCURACY OF REF (A). I ALSO LEARNED (A) THAT GENSCHER WHO HAD ASKED FOR DISCUSSION WHILE HE COULD BE PRESENT STRONGLY SUPPORTED BRUNNER, AND (B) A BIT MORE ABOUT DEGUINGAUD'S LINE OF ARGUMENT. HE SPECIFICALLY SAID THAT NOT ONLY WAS THE U.S. APPROACH CONTRARY TO BILATERAL U.S.-FRENCH UNDERSTANDINGS BUT HE ADDED THAT IT WAS INCOMPATIBLE WITH THE TERMS OF REFERENCE FOR INFCE NEGOTIATED BY THE SEVEN SUMMIT COUNTRIES IN PARIS IN JULY (AND SUBSEQUENTLY
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FORMALIZED IN THE FINAL COMMUNIQUE OF OCTOBER 21 INFCE ORGANIZING CONFERENCE). IN ADDITION, A MEMBER OF HIS PARTY SAID IT WAS "INTOLERABLE" THAT ONLY FOUR DAYS AFTER THE U.S. GOVERNMENT AGREED ON THE GROUND RULES FOR INFCE THE U.S. BROKE ITS WORD BY REQUESTING, BY NOTE TO THE COMMISSION, RENEGOTIATION OF THE U.S.-EURATOM ACCORDS.
(COMMENT: WE CANNOT RECONCILE THIS WITH FACT THAT OUR

NOTE WAS DELIVERED OCTOBER 17).

2. WE HAVE EXAMINED THE OCTOBER COMMUNIQUE ON INFCE AND CONCLUDE THAT THE PARAGRAPH THE FRENCH HAVE IN MIND IS THE FOLLOWING:

"THE EVALUATION WILL BE CARRIED OUT IN A SPIRIT OF OBJECTIVITY, WITH MUTUAL RESPECT FOR EACH COUNTRY'S CHOICES AND DECISIONS IN THIS FIELD, WITHOUT JEOPARDIZING THEIR RESPECTIVE FUEL CYCLE POLICIES OR INTERNATIONAL COOPERATION, AGREEMENTS, AND CONTRACTS FOR THE PEACEFUL USE OF NUCLEAR ENERGY, PROVIDED THAT AGREED SAFEGUARDS MEASURES ARE APPLIED."

3. IT STRIKES ME THAT THIS LANGUAGE IS SUFFICIENTLY AMBIGUOUS TO BE COMPATIBLE WITH OUR POINT OF VIEW. AT THE SAME TIME I NOTE THAT DEGUINGAUD TOLD HIS FELLOW FOREIGN MINISTERS THAT FRANCE WOULD WALK OUT OF THE INFCE EXERCISE IF THE US, PURSUANT TO THE NON-PROLIFERATION ACT BUT CONTRARY TO THIS INFCE COMMITMENT, CUT OFF EXPORTS. HE ALSO GAVE IT AS HIS PERSONAL JUDGMENT THAT PRESIDENT CARTER, IF CONFRONTED WITH A CHOICE, WOULD FIND A WAY TO SAVE INFCE -- ALL THIS IN THE CONTEXT OF URGING HIS COLLEAGUES TO REJECT THE AMERICAN REQUEST FOR NEGOTIATIONS.

4. IT NEVERTHELESS REMAINS THE VIEW OF KEY SENIOR EUROPEANS INVOLVED THAT THE FRENCH POSITION WILL CHANGE
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AFTER THE ELECTIONS, SUBJECT TO THE CAUTION THAT UK FOREIGN SECRETARY OWEN, WHO SAT SILENT THROUGH COUNCIL DISCUSSION BUT WHO HAS MADE SOME PUBLIC REFERENCES TO THE NEED TO LOOK AT THE ISSUES IN TERMS OF INTERNATIONAL LAW, DOES NOT RALLY TO THE FRENCH THESIS. HINTON

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